



# PROPOSED MONTEREY ROAD COMPLETE STREETS LANE REDUCTION AND BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT



## THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and requests from local business owners, on May 19, 2021, the City Council approved moving forward with the first step in implementing the Downtown Lane Reduction Program and associated Place-Branding and Beautification effort. The Lane Reduction Project will improve accessibility, increase safety, and create additional space for community members and businesses. The Place-Branding and Beautification Project may use trees, planters, and other elements to support beautification and consistency throughout the Downtown, in conjunction, or separate from the parklets.

Over the last four months, the City has held numerous community meetings, worked alongside a community-based working group, and hired an architectural design firm, AP+I Design, to develop alternatives that best implement the Lane Reduction and Beautification Project while at the same time, mitigating traffic impacts. Based on community feedback, City staff is developing designs and recommendations on how to best slow down traffic through Downtown, make Downtown safer for cars, bikes and pedestrians, while supporting the need for parking.

The purpose of this display is to showcase the proposal for the Lane Reduction Project, the Traffic Mitigation Plans, and the Beautification and Parklet ideas. More information can be found on the City's website, [www.morganhill.ca.gov](http://www.morganhill.ca.gov).

**The City wants to take this opportunity to thank all the businesses and community members that have engaged with us and shared ideas on this topic.** We know how polarizing the lane reduction project is. We know traffic impacts are top of mind. And **we are grateful for the thoughtful engagement from our community** to find win-win solutions.



The lane reduction at its core, intends to slow down traffic through downtown to improve safety. The tradeoff of making Downtown safer with the lane reduction **and** protecting nearby neighborhoods means that the community will need to drive slower through Downtown or use the bypass route. It also means that the community should avoid cutting through neighborhood streets. To alleviate traffic congestion concerns, the Lane Reduction Project will be tied to a traffic management strategy to improve the Butterfield Corridor by increasing its efficiency through traffic signal upgrades allowing synchronization of the entire corridor, signal prioritization for drivers using Butterfield at the Cochrane and Monterey Road intersection, and physical improvements to specific intersections.

### Summary:

Join us for the City Council meeting on December 15, 2021, at which time City staff will present the implementation plan for the Lane Reduction and Beautification Project. Recommendations will include traffic mitigation efforts, changes to parking spaces to create more short-term parking opportunities, and a proposed schedule for the implementation of the various elements of the project, including traffic mitigations.

Visit the City's website for more information about the project and to provide feedback



Lane Reduction



Traffic Mitigation and Improvements



Parklets and Beautification





## Lane Reduction

The Lane Reduction Project for Downtown will repurpose one lane of traffic from Main Avenue to Dunne Avenue with the intention of improving safety for cars, cyclists and pedestrians. This will result in one lane in each direction and will slow down traffic through the Downtown core, making it more walkable. The proposed Lane Reduction Project creates a dedicated bike lane using a buffer area and rubber safety humps to allow for emergency access. The bike lane will be protected for the entirety of the corridor (Main to Dunne Avenues). The design allows for flexibility for parking or parklets on a block-by-block basis. Signage and traffic mitigation efforts are proposed to alleviate congestion.

### Benefits of the Lane Reduction Include:

- Increased safety for residents and visitors using all modes of transportation
- Slowing the speed of traffic
- Creating more space for community
- Increasing economic vitality
- Protecting our small Downtown from the regular cut-through traffic
- Repurposing space for people and businesses to thrive
- Reducing noise levels at the businesses and adjacent public space
- Increasing the distance of vehicles from residents and businesses



### SUMMARY

The topic of a lane reduction has been debated by the community for over 20 years. In 2015, the City of Morgan Hill embarked on a pilot program where the lane reduction showcased the opportunities and impacts of one lane in each direction. Overall, the pilot project met its goals of slowing down traffic and increasing pedestrian activity. However, the lane reduction pilot project was not approved due to a number of factors that were impacting Downtown at the time. While a lot of the traffic was diverted to Butterfield Blvd., the City Council ultimately decided to wait until the Hale Avenue extension was completed.

Due to safety concerns and the recent impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, the City Council directed staff to revisit the Lane Reduction Project and include a beautification component. City staff has held numerous community meetings and met with a community-wide working group over the last four months to obtain feedback on how to best design a project that achieves the lane reduction and beautification project while mitigating the impacts of diverted traffic on the community. A traffic mitigation plan has been designed to be incorporated as part of the Lane Reduction Project.

### The 2015 Complete Streets Pilot Project

The results of the Lane Reduction test run were presented to the City Council in August 2015 and the results included several key findings:

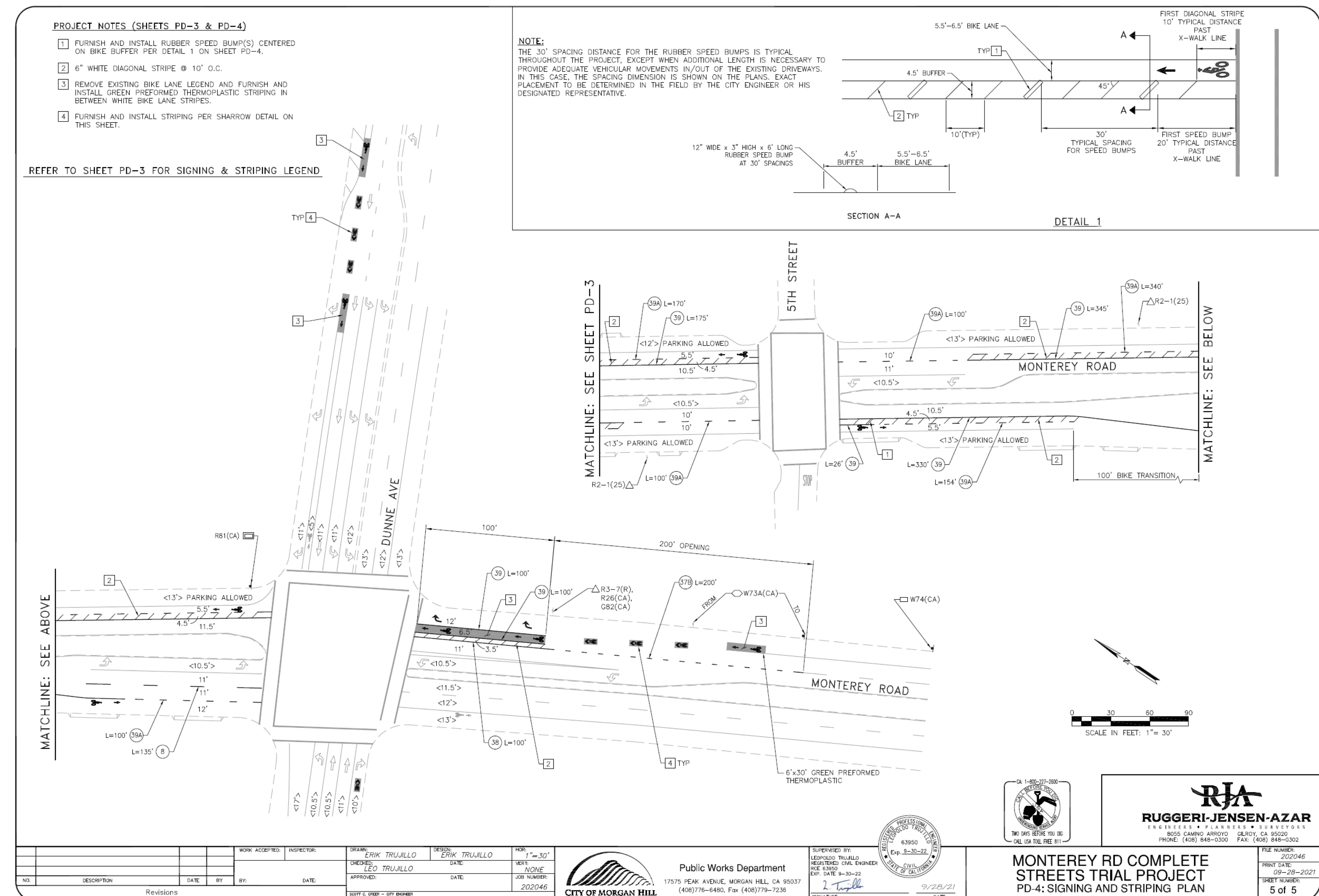
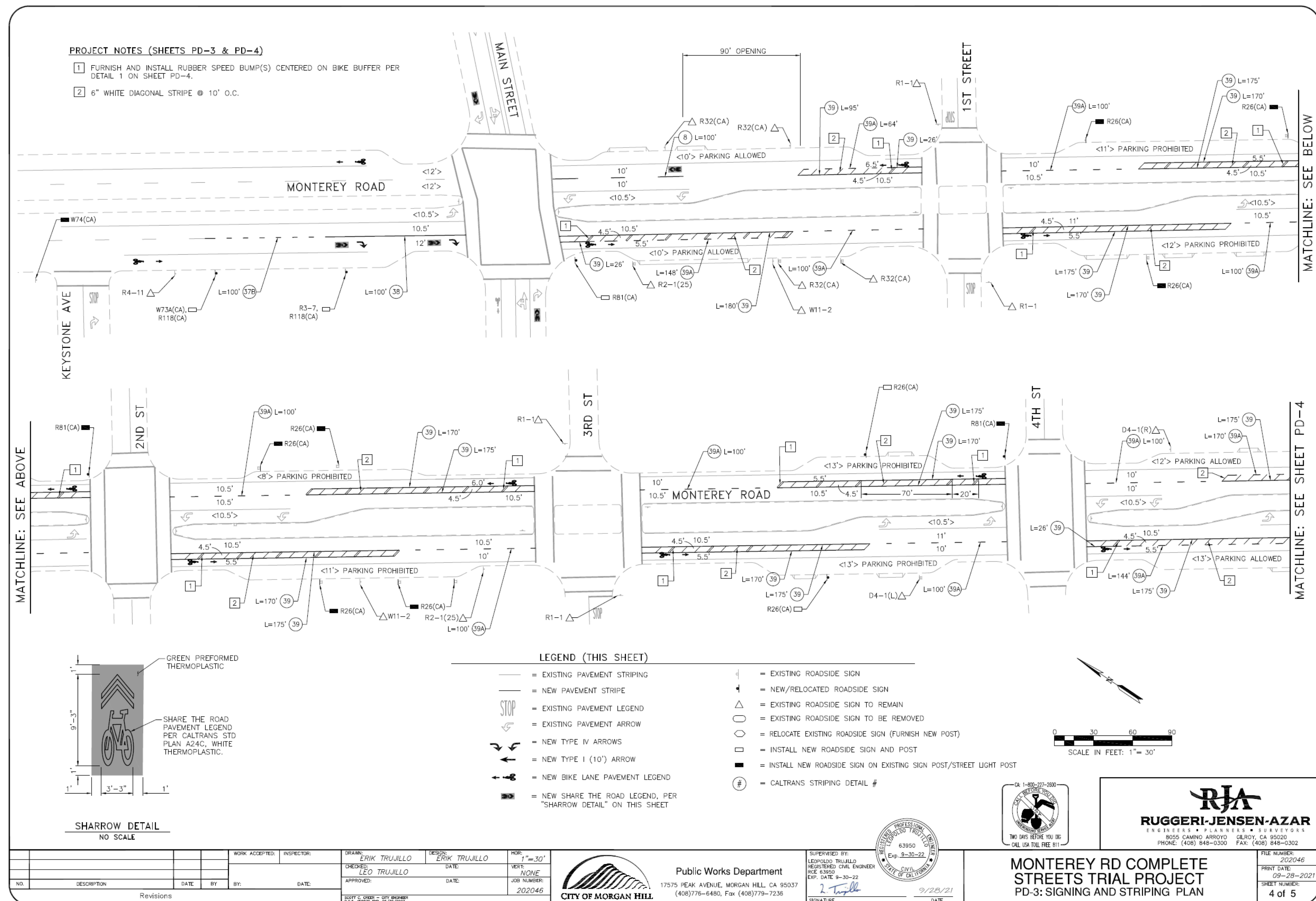
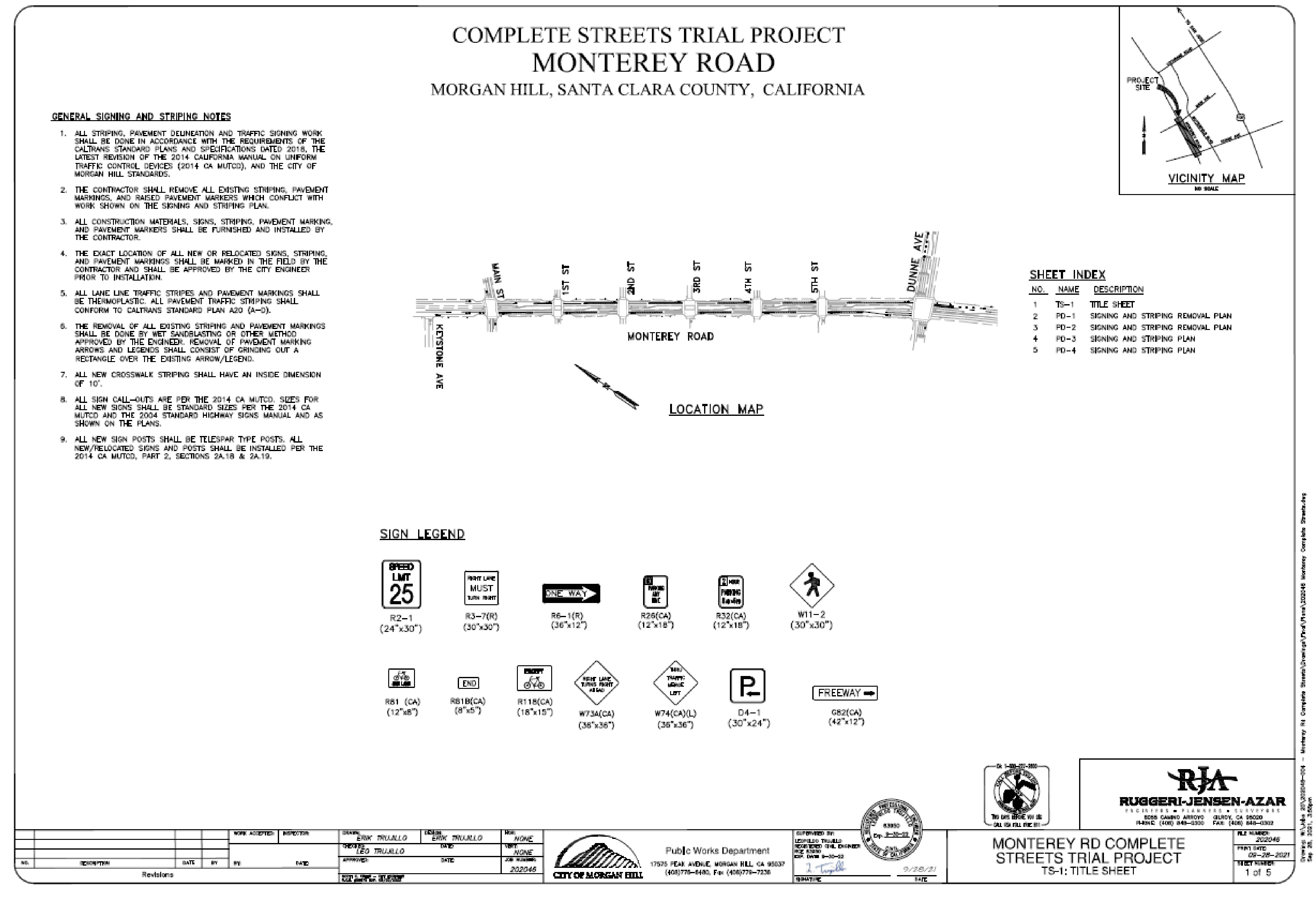
- Number of people walking increased by 6%
- 54% increase in diversity among people riding bicycles (age, gender, race, and ethnicity)
- 614% increase in the number of youth riding bicycles
- 48% decrease in people riding bicycles on sidewalks
- Noise levels declined to a more comfortable level, as sound energy levels decreased
- An increase in parking occupancy occurred, and parking turnover rates increased
- People riding bikes nearly tripled, from 74 to 214
- Impact to public transit was an average of 29 seconds per trip
- Travel time reliability increased slightly
- The speed of traffic remained the same at 27 miles per hour
- 20% of traffic diverted to Butterfield Blvd were semi-trucks, pick-up trucks, vans, and other loud and large vehicles



## Lane Reduction Plans

The updated plans for the Lane Reduction are based on the 2015 Pilot Project with improvements based on experience and input from Public Safety, residents, and Downtown businesses. The plans include:

- Traffic calming features
- A buffered bike lane, which is 5.5' wide with a 4.5' buffer
- Rubber safety humps to prevent driving through the bike lane, yet allow emergency access
- Consistency to minimize driver confusion
- Flexibility for parklets or to retain parking block by block
- Public safety access through the bike lane
- Intersection improvements at Monterey Road and Main Avenue to increase bicyclist safety and improve traffic flow



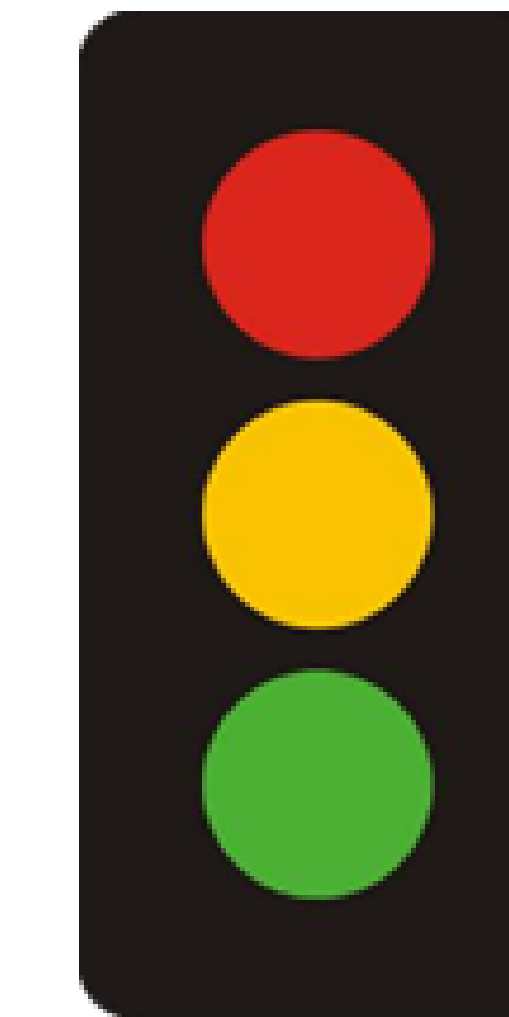


# TRAFFIC MITIGATION & IMPROVEMENTS



Improvements to the Butterfield Boulevard Corridor will be the key component to mitigate traffic on Monterey Road. Using Butterfield Boulevard as an alternative to Monterey Road will typically add less than 1 mile to any resident's commute, however the greatest concern is congestion and slower travel times. Increasing the traffic efficiency of Butterfield Boulevard will be considered prior to the lane reduction in Downtown. The traffic mitigation measures include the following improvements:

## Traffic Signal Improvements



13 traffic signals will be upgraded with new signal controllers to allow for synchronization of all the signals along the Butterfield Corridor. This includes the traffic signals at Cochrane and Monterey and along Cochrane ahead of Butterfield Boulevard. The signal synchronization will be used during peak traffic periods to allow traffic to move northbound and southbound through the entire corridor at the speed limit on a green light. Additionally, timing at the intersection of Cochrane and Monterey will be altered to promote use of Butterfield Boulevard.

## Physical Intersection Improvements

Physical intersection improvements will occur at two locations to support improved traffic flow. This includes the Cochrane and Butterfield Intersection which will allow for easier turning off Cochrane onto Butterfield. Additionally, the Main and Monterey intersection will see slight improvements to support East/West traffic flow on Main Avenue through Monterey.



## Messaging and Signage

Prior to and during the Lane Reduction, the City will implement a communication campaign to encourage residents and out of town drivers to utilize the improved Butterfield Corridor to travel north and south through the City. This campaign will include communication channels and a significant increase in signage ahead of and along Monterey Road. Signage will include permanent signage and moveable flashing reader boards.



## SUMMARY

The Downtown Lane Reduction Project will replace one lane of traffic from Main Avenue to Dunne Avenue with a bike lane with the intention of improving safety for cars, cyclists, and pedestrians. The tradeoff of making Downtown safer with the lane reduction **and** protecting nearby neighborhoods means that the community will need to drive slower through Downtown or use the bypass route. It also means that the community should avoid cutting through neighborhood streets. To alleviate traffic congestion concerns, the Lane Reduction Project will be tied to a traffic management strategy to improve the Butterfield Corridor by increasing its efficiency through traffic signal upgrades allowing synchronization of the entire corridor, signal prioritization for drivers using Butterfield at the Cochrane and Monterey Road intersection, physical improvements to specific intersections, and the use of messaging and signage.



## Parklets

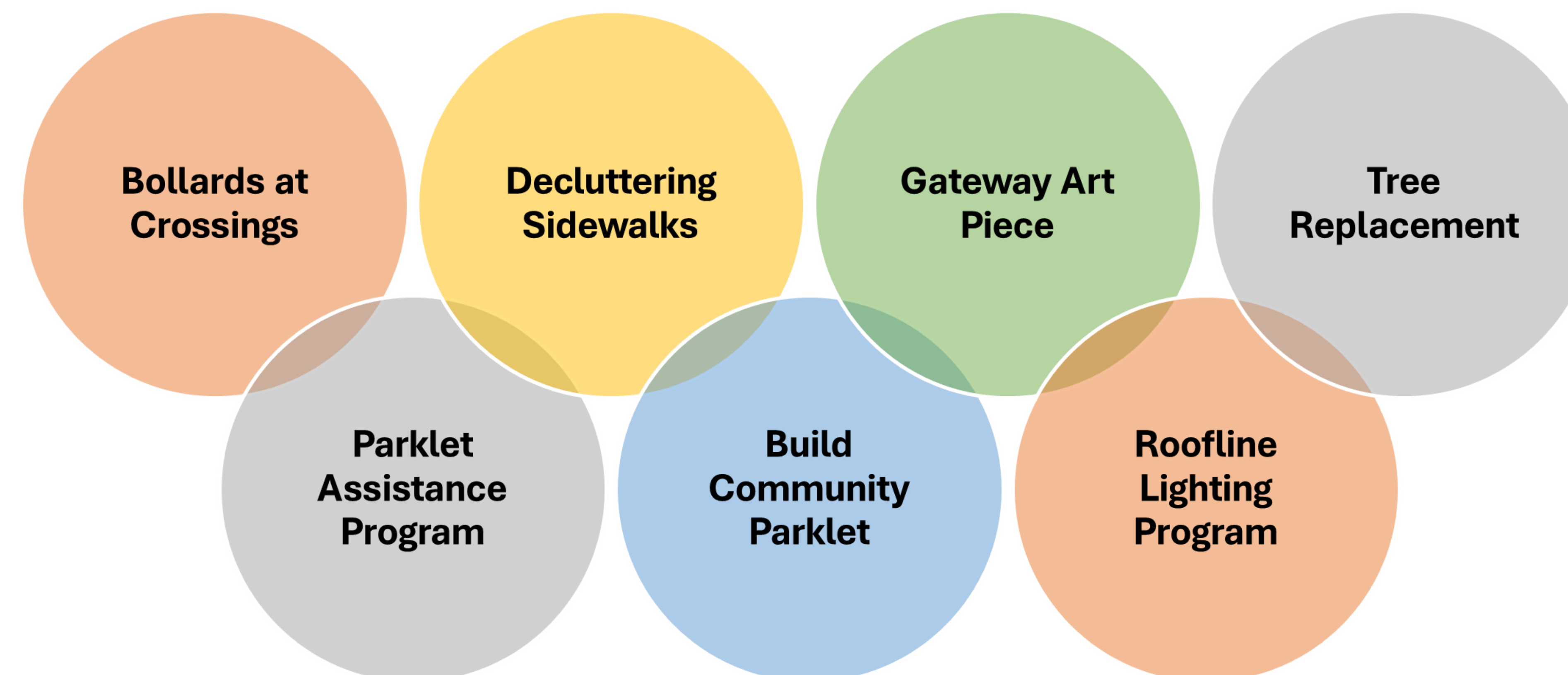
In 2018, the City Council approved the pilot Parklet Program to encourage outdoor dining. It was not until the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting indoor dining restriction that restaurants were urged to operate outdoors. The City's Al Fresco Program allowed numerous businesses to expand their operations outdoors. Today, five businesses are operating under the temporary Al Fresco Program and three under the Parklet Program. Parklet and Al Fresco activations have impacted 20 parking spaces.

Morgan Hill's adoption of parklets, Al Fresco dining, and the utilization of public space for business activation is not unique. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, cities across the region, state and country were beginning to activate the public space adjacent to businesses to create a sense of place, gather as a community, and to drive increased sales tax revenue from increased business activity. Ultimately, the City benefits from these activations as a result of the sales tax paid by residents and visitors alike, while simultaneously creating a vibrant Downtown District that adds to Morgan Hill's unique quality of life. Regardless of the lane reduction, we need to plan for the "new normal" which is an increased desire for outdoor dining and activations.

AP+I Design rendered some parklet designs that could provide consistency and elevate the quality of the current parklets. Three design options were offered using agricultural, historical, and industrial themes. The use of bollards was also proposed as a safety mechanism next to the planters.

## Beautification

Recognizing that parklets can range in cost from \$40,000 to \$60,000, it is important to acknowledge that most of the businesses will not be able to afford and fully build out parklets. Therefore, the beautification piece becomes more challenging to implement. Taking a step back, we have repeatedly heard that the Downtown sidewalks and streets seem cluttered. We have also heard the need to support retail businesses and create community space. Given the City's limited financial resources, the following suggestions should be considered:



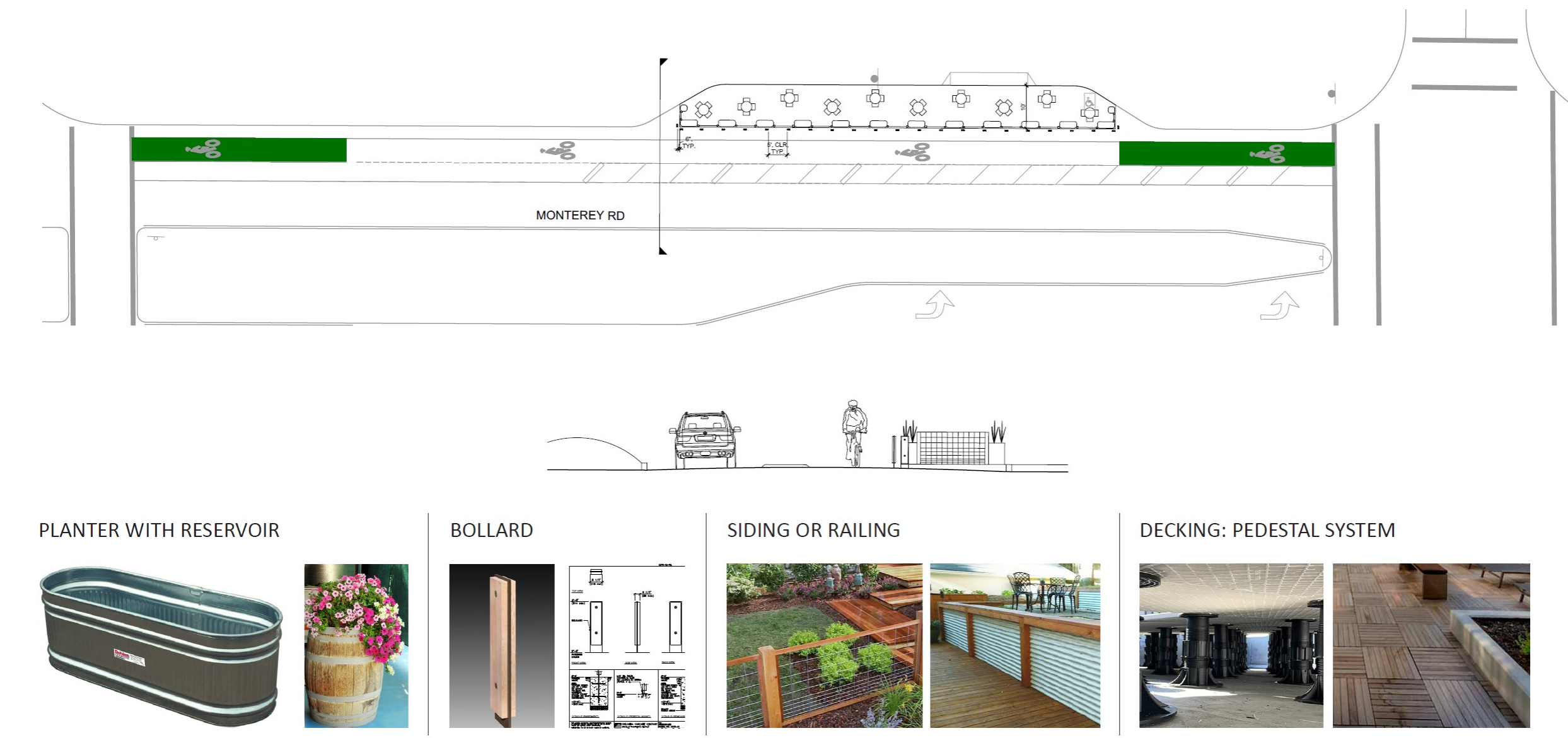
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# PARKLETS AND BEAUTIFICATION

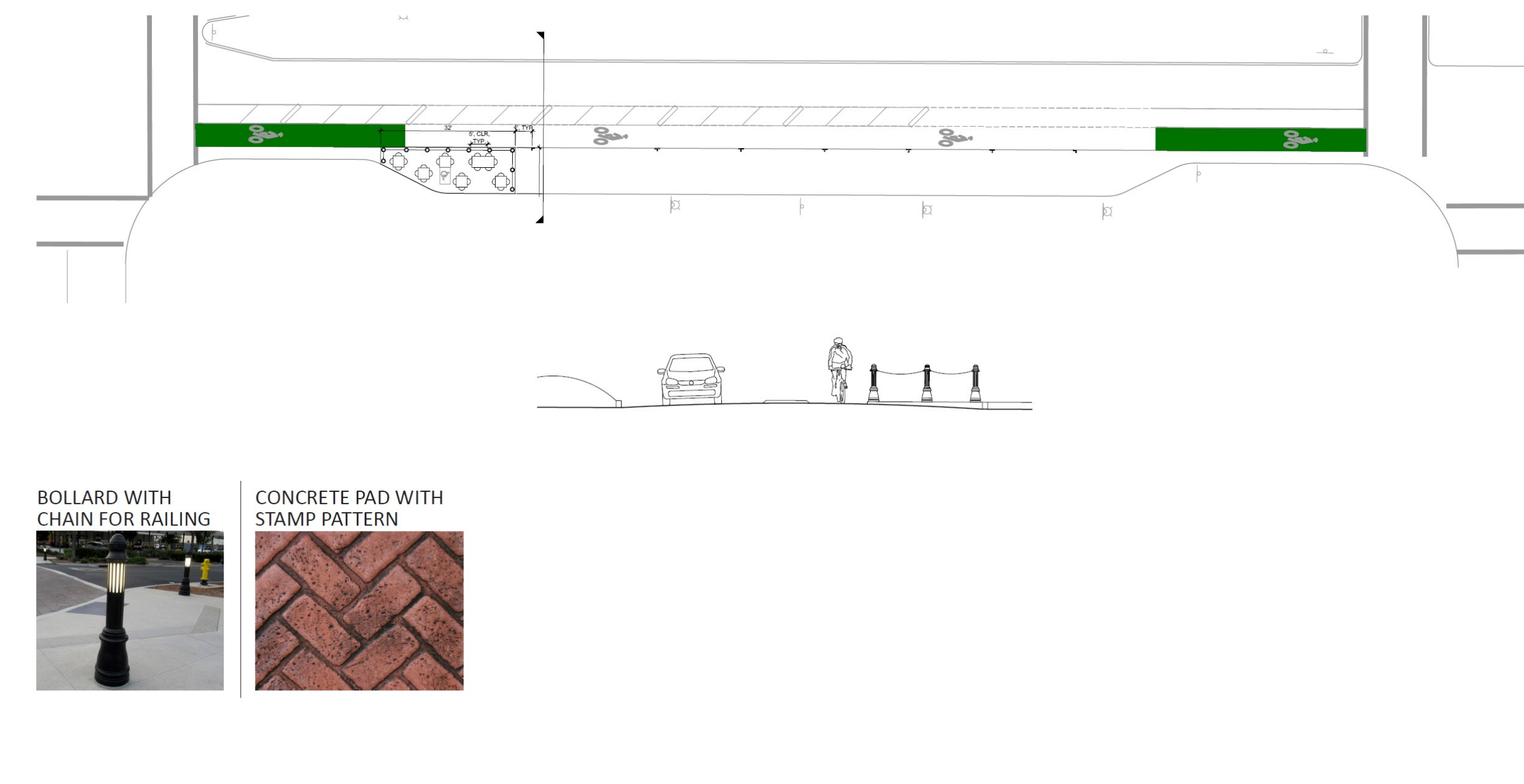
Interface Option 1 (Agricultural Influence)



Interface Option 1 (Agricultural Influence)



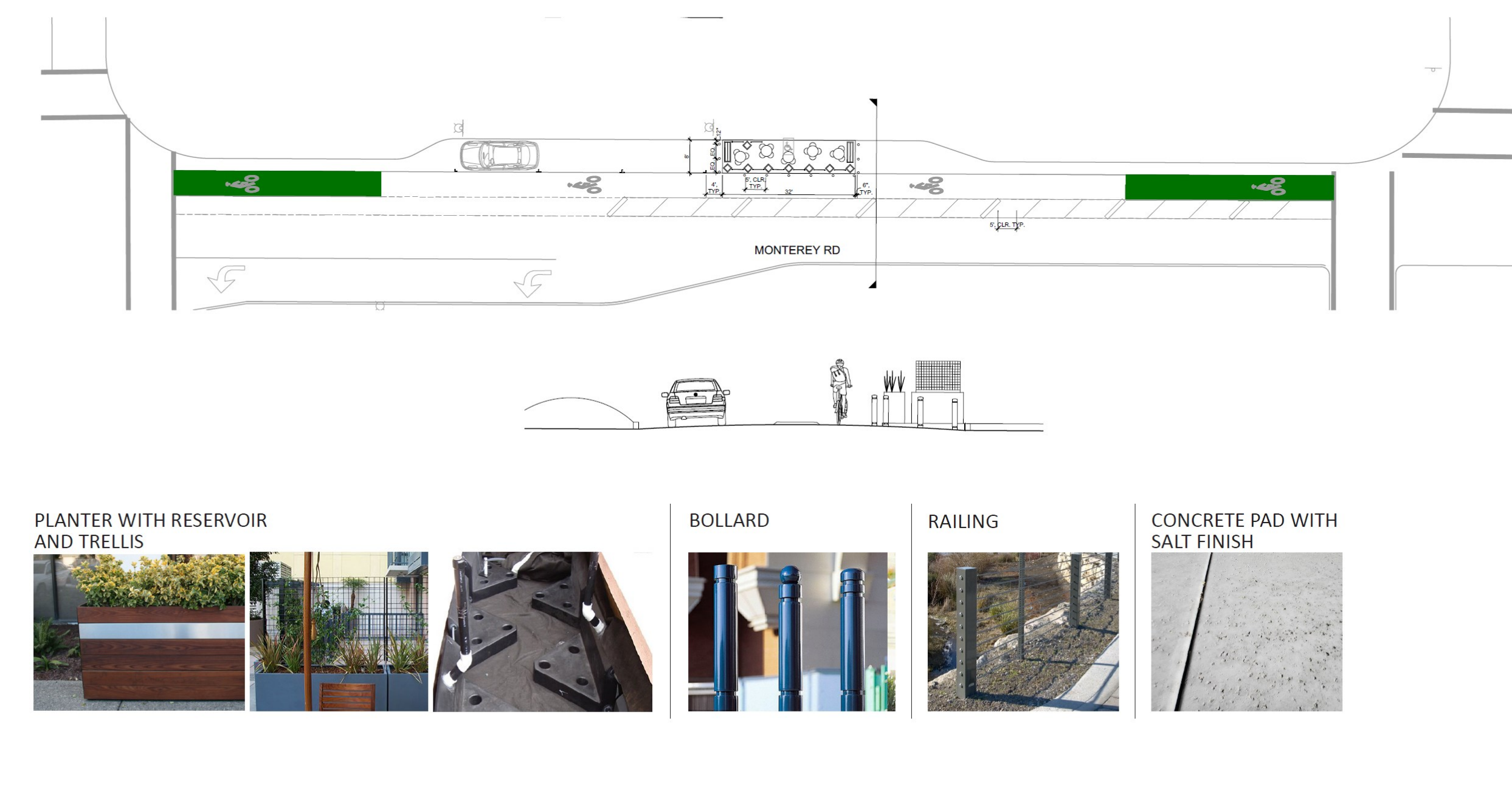
Interface Option 2 (Historical Influence)



Interface Option 2 (Historical Influence)



Interface Option 3 (Industrial Influence)



Interface Option 3 (Industrial Influence)



Parklets allow businesses to extend their operations onto street parking spaces. Parklets support business activity, enhance the business district by creating interesting spaces for people to enjoy the outdoors. One way to beautify Downtown is by standardizing parklet designs. Architectural consultants from AP+I Design created three designs that offer different styles and could elevate parklet designs and create consistency. These design motifs include an agricultural theme, a historical theme, and an industrial theme. Which one do you like best?

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